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SPUN-YARN AND SPINDRIFT



SPUN-YARN AND SPINDRIFT

BY
NORAH M. HOLLAND



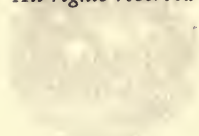
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SPUN-YARN

SPINDLE

HORACE W. HOLLAND

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CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
THE LITTLE DOG-ANGEL . . .	7	THE SHEPHERDS' SONG . . .	54
SHULE AROON . . .	8	A CHRISTMAS CAROL . . .	55
A SONG OF ERIN . . .	9	DE PROFUNDIS . . .	56
THE ROAD ACROSS SLIEVE RUE .	10	THE CRY OF THE DAMNED . .	57
TO W. B. YEATS . . .	12	OUR LADY OF REMEMBRANCE .	58
A FAIRY TALE . . .	13	MAID MARY . . .	59
THE KING OF ERIN'S DAUGHTER .	15	THE TWO CROWNS . . .	60
KITTY O'NEIL . . .	16	A SPARROW IN CHURCH . . .	62
SPRING IN THE CITY . . .	18	SEA-GULLS . . .	63
THE WILD GEESE . . .	19	MY DOG AND I . . .	65
A SONG OF MEMORY . . .	20	SNOWDROPS . . .	67
IN MEMORY OF A FAILURE . . .	21	SPRING . . .	68
THE UNCHRISTENED CHILD . . .	22	OCTOBER WIND . . .	69
TO AUDREY, AGED FOUR . . .	23	OCTOBER . . .	70
A LULLABY . . .	24	IN ARCADIE . . .	71
O LITTLEST HANDS AND DEAREST .	25	JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY . . .	73
A LOVE SONG . . .	26	THE SANDMAN . . .	74
A SONG OF LOVE . . .	27	THE REMITTANCE MEN . . .	75
DEAD LOVE . . .	28	THE LAST VOYAGE . . .	77
THE WIFE FROM THE SEA . . .	29	BALLADE OF DREAMS . . .	78
A STORM AT NIGHT . . .	30	SHIPS OF OLD RENOWN . . .	79
KITTY'S FEET . . .	31	SEA-SONG . . .	80
THE PORT O' MISSING SHIPS . . .	32	THE SEA-WIND . . .	81
THE RIDE OF THE SHADOWS . . .	34	MY PHILOSOPHY . . .	82
GHOSTS . . .	36	EASTER, 1917 . . .	83
OUR LADY OF DARKNESS . . .	38	"HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD"	85
DALUAN . . .	39	THE KAISER . . .	86
DEAD—AND LIVING . . .	40	CAPTAINS ADVENTUROUS . . .	87
THE MASTER OF SHADOWS . . .	42	DRAKE'S DRUM . . .	88
DIANE AU BOIS . . .	43	OUR DEAD . . .	89
THE RED HORSE . . .	45	NEW YEAR'S EVE, 1916 . . .	90
THE ADVENTURERS . . .	46	TO IRELAND'S DEAD . . .	91
THE WATCHER OF THE THRESHOLD .	47	A SONG OF EXILE . . .	92
THE GREY RIDER . . .	48	THE AIR-MEN . . .	93
JOAN THE MAID . . .	50	THE DEFEATED . . .	94
NEWBURY TOWN . . .	51	THE GENTLEMEN OF OXFORD . .	95
A CHRISTMAS HYMN . . .	53		

CONTENTS

Page	Page
Introduction	1
Chapter I	10
Chapter II	20
Chapter III	30
Chapter IV	40
Chapter V	50
Chapter VI	60
Chapter VII	70
Chapter VIII	80
Chapter IX	90
Chapter X	100
Chapter XI	110
Chapter XII	120
Chapter XIII	130
Chapter XIV	140
Chapter XV	150
Chapter XVI	160
Chapter XVII	170
Chapter XVIII	180
Chapter XIX	190
Chapter XX	200
Chapter XXI	210
Chapter XXII	220
Chapter XXIII	230
Chapter XXIV	240
Chapter XXV	250
Chapter XXVI	260
Chapter XXVII	270
Chapter XXVIII	280
Chapter XXIX	290
Chapter XXX	300
Chapter XXXI	310
Chapter XXXII	320
Chapter XXXIII	330
Chapter XXXIV	340
Chapter XXXV	350
Chapter XXXVI	360
Chapter XXXVII	370
Chapter XXXVIII	380
Chapter XXXIX	390
Chapter XL	400
Chapter XLI	410
Chapter XLII	420
Chapter XLIII	430
Chapter XLIV	440
Chapter XLV	450
Chapter XLVI	460
Chapter XLVII	470
Chapter XLVIII	480
Chapter XLIX	490
Chapter L	500

SPUN-YARN AND SPINDRIFT

THE LITTLE DOG-ANGEL

HIGH up in the courts of Heaven to-day
A little dog-angel waits,
With the other angels he will not play,
But he sits alone at the gates;
“For I know that my master will come,” says he:
“And when he comes, he will call for me.”

He sees the spirits that pass him by
As they hasten towards the throne,
And he watches them with a wistful eye
As he sits at the gates alone;
“But I know if I just wait patiently
That some day my master will come,” says he.

And his master, far on the earth below,
As he sits in his easy chair,
Forgets sometimes, and he whistles low
For the dog that is not there;
And the little dog-angel cocks his ears,
And dreams that his master's call he hears.

And I know, when at length his master waits
Outside in the dark and cold
For the hand of Death to open the gates
That lead to those courts of gold,
The little dog-angel's eager bark
Will comfort his soul in the shivering dark.

SHULE AROON

FAIR are the fields of Canada, and broad her rivers flow,
But my heart's away from Canada to seek the hills I know,
Far, far away o'er billows grey, where western breezes sweep,
And—it's not the songs of Canada go sounding through my sleep.

Shule, shule, shule, aroon,
Shule go soccair, agus shule go cuain,
Shule, shule, shule, aroon,
Sgo Dhae tu, mavourneen, slan.

Along the sides of old Slieve Dhu again my footstep falls,
Again the turf smoke rises blue, again the cuckoo calls,
Once more adown the mountain brown the brown bog-waters leap—
Oh how the croon of "Shule aroon" goes sounding through my sleep!

Shule, shule, shule, aroon,
Shule go soccair, agus shule go cuain,
Shule, shule, shule, aroon,
Sgo Dhae tu, mavourneen, slan.

Oh 'tis I am here in Canada, far, far across the foam,
And many years and many tears divide me from my home;
But still above the Irish hills the stars their watches keep,
And—it's not the songs of Canada go sounding through my sleep.

Shule, shule, shule, aroon,
Shule go soccair, agus shule go cuain,
Shule, shule, shule, aroon,
Sgo Dhae tu, mavourneen, slan.

A SONG OF ERIN

FAR to westward in the sunset tall and bare her cliffs arise,
Mother Erin, with the tender love and laughter in her eyes,
Looking out across the waters, dreaming of her argosies.

Argosies that sail forever, laden down with hopes and fears,
Ships of dream, returning never, though she waits throughout the years,
Waits, with eyes wherein the laughter grows more sorrowful than tears.

One by one her children leave her—stalwart sons and daughters fair,
Straining eyes grown dim with anguish as her hilltops melt in air;
Bending from her cliffs she watches, drinking deep of their despair.

Yet she showers her gifts upon them—gifts of laughter and of tears;
Gives their eyes the Vision Splendid, fairy music to their ears,
Weaves around their feet her magic—spells that strengthen through the years.

So her children, unforgetting, howsoe'er their footsteps roam,
Turn their hearts forever westward, longing for the day to come
When once more they see her stooping from her heights to call them home.

THE ROAD ACROSS SLIEVE RUE

As I went down to Dublin town
The road across Slieve Rue,
I met a maid in crimson gown;
Her little feet were bare and brown,
She looked at me, she laughed at me
With eyes of watchet blue.

No mortal maid was half so fair,
Or half so dainty sweet;
The sun was tangled in her hair,
And O her feet were brown and bare;
I laid the very heart of me
Before those dancing feet.

"O go you down to Dublin quay
To sail upon the Bay?
I pray you, gentle sir," said she,
"To turn and walk a mile with me."
So witching were the eyes of her
I could not say her nay.

She gave to me a ring of gold,
And kisses, two and three;
She sang me elfin songs of old,
She lured my heart into her hold,
Then turned and left me lonely there—
A wicked witch was she.

THE ROAD ACROSS SLIEVE RUE II

As I went down to Dublin quay
By darkling ways alone,
My fairy maid was gone from me,
For O a wicked witch was she,
And all my heart within me lay
As heavy as a stone.

TO W. B. YEATS

A WIND of dreams comes singing over sea
From where the white waves kiss the shores of home,
Bringing upon its rainbow wings to me
Glimpses of days gone by—
Of wastes of water, where the sea-gulls cry
Above the sounding foam.

Or through the mists do Finn and Usheen ride,
With all their men, along some faery shore,
While Bran and Sgeolan follow at their side
Adown the shadowy track,
Till in the sunset Caoilte's hair blows back
And Niamh calls once more.

Or the brown bees hum through the livelong day
In glades of Inisfree, where sunlight gleams,
The bean flower scents again the dear old way,
Once more the turf-fire burns;
The memory of the long dead past returns
Borne on that wind of dreams.

A FAIRY TALE

WITH sword at side, on his charger good,
The King's son of Erin
Into the depths of the dark, green wood
Forward was faring;
Golden-armoured and golden-curved,
Faith, the sweetest song in the world
His heart was hearing!

Onward he rode, with heart elate;
Gaily he sought her—
She, the Princess to be his mate,
The great King's daughter,
Jewelled fingers and golden crown,
Slim young body and eyes as brown
As the brown bog-water.

On he rode through a laughing land:
The ways grew wider,
There stood a cottage close at hand,
And there he spied her—
O but her feet were brown and bare,
And brown were her curls, as she stood there
With her geese beside her.

Alas! for the Princess, proud and slim,
The great King's daughter;
We'll trust she wasted no thought on him,
For he straight forgot her,

A FAIRY TALE

Forgot her jewels and golden crown,
For the goose-girl's laughing eyes were brown
As the brown bog-water.

Then straightway down from his steed he sprang
And bent above her;
O sweet were the songs the breezes sang
Across the clover;
But what the words he said in her ear,
Since none but her geese were by to hear,
I can't discover.

And what of the Princess, proud and high?
Good luck upon her!
Sure, another Prince came riding by,
And he wooed and won her.
Now I tell the tale as 'twas told to me
By a fairy lad, across the sea
In County Connor.

THE KING OF ERIN'S DAUGHTER

THE King of Erin's daughter had wind-blown hair and bright,
The King of Erin's daughter, her eyes were like the sea.
(O Rose of all the roses, have you forgotten quite
The story of the days of old that once you told to me?)

The King of Erin's daughter went up the mountain side,
And who but she was singing as she went upon her way?
"O somewhere waits a King's son, and I shall be his bride;
And tall he is, and fair he is, and none shall say him nay."

The King of Erin's daughter (O fair was she and sweet)
Went laughing up the mountain without a look behind,
Till on the lofty summit that lay beneath her feet
She found a King's son waiting there, his brows with poppies twined.

O tall was he and fair was he. He looked upon her face
And whispered in her ear a word unnamed of mortal breath,
And very still she rested, clasped close in his embrace,
The King of Erin's daughter, for the bridegroom's name was Death.

KITTY O'NEIL

O A bit of a dance in an Irish street—

Hogan was there, and Hennessy,

Many a colleen fair and sweet,

And Kitty O'Neil she danced with me;

Kitty O'Neil, with eyes of brown,

And feet as light as the flakes o' snow.

Was it last year, O Kitty aroon,

Or was it a hundred years ago?

Hogan is out on a Texan plain,

Hennessy fell in Manila fight,

And I—I am back in New York again

In my old arm-chair at the Club to-night;

And Kitty O'Neil—the snow lies white

On the turf above her across the sea,

And stranger colleens are dancing light

Where Kitty O'Neil once danced with me.

O the Antrim glens and the thrushes' song,

And the hedges white with blossoming may,

Many a colleen tripping along,

But none so fair as the one away:

"Musha, God save you!" I to them say,

"God save you kindly!" they answer me;

I shiver and wake, in the dawning grey,

And Kitty O'Neil lies over the sea.

O a bit of a dance in an Irish street—
Hogan was there, and Hennessy,
Many a colleen fair and sweet,
And Kitty O'Neil she danced with me;
Kitty O'Neil, with eyes of brown,
And feet as light as the flakes of snow.
Was it last year, O Kitty aroon,
Or was it a hundred years ago?

SPRING IN THE CITY

OUTSIDE my garret window, set
Amid the city's dust and blare,
One bit of green is growing yet—
A gnarled old hawthorn tree stands there

A little bird sings in its bough,
Where may-buds break as white as foam;
It breaks my heart to hear him now,
For O, he sings the songs of home.

His wings are of the hodden grey,
A little lilting thing is he;
He pipes a carol blythe and gay;
But sad the thoughts he brings to me.

Once more the Irish hills rise green,
The lark springs to the sun once more,
Once more I tread the old borean
And see you at the cabin door.

The young May moon her cresset burns
In misty skies of Irish blue,
And for an hour my spirit turns
From dreary streets to dream of you

O little, lilting birdeen, cease!
You stab my heart with every strain
Bringing me back old memories
Of days that will not come again.

THE WILD GEESE

O PLEASANT are the fields of France, her vine-clad hills aglow,
And broad and smooth her rivers are, as singing on they go,—
Durance and Seine and Loire and Rhone—but not for us they flow.

And sweetly on a Frenchman's ear the songs of France may ring,
But not for us their melody who still amid their swing
The sobbing beat alone can hear of songs we used to sing.

For, as the streams of Babylon, though broad and fair they swept,
Were waters of captivity, whereby the Hebrews wept,
Dreaming of dear Jerusalem, where their forefathers slept—

So dreaming by the waves of France we think on Sion too,
Heartsick with longing for the streams we and our fathers knew—
Liffey and Lee and Avonmore and tawny Avondhu.

And turning homeward yearning eyes that ne'er shall see her strand,
We tune our harps and strike once more the chords with faltering hand,
And sing again the song of home, far in a lonely land.

“If we forget Jerusalem!” Ah, well we know the song—
Our waters of captivity, bitter their waves and strong,
And faint our hearts for weariness, how long, O Lord, how long?

A SONG OF MEMORY

HERE as I sit in the dark and ponder,
Watching the firelight dance and gleam,
What brings them back to my mind, I wonder?—
Those old days of laughter and dream.
Dear old days, when we roamed together
All the pathways that cross Slieve Rue,
Caring for naught in the sunny weather,
Laughing together, I and you.

Voice of the west wind, calling, calling,
Sobbing beat of the Irish rain,
Whispering leaves and waters falling,
Ay, and you by my side again;
Out of the past I hear them ringing—
All the songs of the days of old;
Hear the lark on the hillside singing,
See the gleam of the gorse's gold.

Till, as I sit in the firelight dreaming,
Watching the shadows grow apace,
Out of the long dead years comes gleaming
There in the flames your laughing face;
All the days that are past and over
Gone in the turf smoke, curling blue,
And from their wreckage I recover
Song and sunshine and youth and you.

IN MEMORY OF A FAILURE ✓

O KATHALEEN ni Houlihan, in blood and ashes lie
The dreams we dreamed, the faith we held, the hopes we builded high;
Once more the path that Emmet trod our bleeding feet must press,
Once more our hearts must bear the load of failure and distress;
But though the dream in ruin fell, yet this much still is true—
O Kathaleen ni Houlihan, at least we died for you.

O Kathaleen ni Houlihan, the hills with Spring are fair,
And fragrant blows the daffodil and violets scent the air,
Once more from out the morning sky the lark's gay challenge rings,
Mounting the blue to Heaven's gate, but not for us he sings,
And summer comes, and autumn tints with bronze and gold the fern,
And bees hum in the heather bloom, but we shall not return.

O Kathaleen ni Houlihan, give us nor praise nor blame,
Only a little Irish dust to cover up our shame;
Only a sod of Irish ground our broken dream to hide,
Where some may pause and say a prayer and "'Twas for her they died;"
For though we brought you grief and pain, yet this much still is true—
O Kathaleen ni Houlihan, at least we died for you.

THE UNCHRISTENED CHILD

ALANNA! Alanna! within the churchyard's round
There's many graves of childer' there, they lie in holy ground;
But yours is on the mountain side beneath the hawthorn tree—
O fleet one, my sweet one, that's gone so far from me.

Alanna! Alanna! When that small mound was made,
No mass was sung, no bell was rung, no priest above it prayed;
Unchristened childer's souls, they say, may ne'er see Heaven's light—
O lone one, my own one, where strays your soul to-night?

Alanna! Alanna! This life's a weary one,
And there's little time for thinking when the hours of work are done,
And the others have forgotten, but there's times I sit apart,
O fair one, my dear one, and hold you in my heart.

Alanna! Alanna! If I were Mary mild,
And heard outside the gates of Heaven a little crying child,
What though its brow the chrisom lacked, I'd lift the golden pin,
O bright one, my white one, and bid you enter in.

Alanna! Alanna! The mountain side is bare,
And the winds they do be blowing and the snows be lying there,
And unchristened childer's souls, they say, may ne'er see Heaven's light—
O lone one, my own one, where strays your soul to-night?

TO AUDREY, AGED FOUR

LIGHT feet, white feet, dancing down the ways,
Spilling out the honey from the flowery days,
May your paths forever flowery be and sweet,
Stony roads of sorrow wait not for your feet.

Light feet, white feet, as you older grow,
Fain are we to keep you from all care and woe;
But if thorn and brier in your roadway be,
Light feet, white feet, meet them merrily.

Light feet, white feet, as you dance along,
God, Who made you, keep you free from stain of wrong,
Give you song and sunshine, laughter, love and praise,
Light feet, white feet, dancing down the ways.

A LULLABY

LITTLE brown feet, that have grown so weary,
Plodding on through the heat of day,
Mother will hold you, mother will fold you
Safe to her breast; little feet, rest;
Now is the time to cease from play.

Little brown hands, that through day's long hours
Never rested, be still at last;
Mother will rest you; come, then, and nest you
Here by her side, nestle and hide;
Creep to her heart and hold it fast.

Little brown head, on my shoulder lying,
Night is coming and day is dead;
Mother will sing you songs, that shall bring you
Childhood's soft sleep, quiet and deep;
Sweet be your dreams, O dear brown head.

O LITTLEST HANDS AND DEAREST

O LITTLEST hands and dearest,
O golden heads and bright,
From out what dear dream country
Come you to me to-night?
For through the shadows falling
I hear your voices calling
Out of the magic spaces
Of infinite delight.

I see your curls a-glimmer,
I see your dear eyes shine,
I feel the childish fingers
Slipped softly into mine;
You bring me back the May-time,
The old, delightful play-time
When all the world was laughter
And life seemed half divine.

Thus, from the shades that gather
Around my path to-night
Your glad child-hands have drawn me
Back to your lands of light,
Giving me for my sadness
The medicine of your gladness,
O littlest hands and dearest,
O golden heads and bright.

A LOVE SONG

Love came to me once more,
His wings all drenched with rain;
Silent his singing lips,
His eyes were dark with pain.

Dead roses in his hands—
Gone were the flowers of yore;
Only a poor, grey ghost,
Love lingered at my door.

Wasted his rounded limbs
And grey his golden hair—
Poor, shadowy, silent God,
Who once had been so fair.

“O Love, great Love,” I cried,
“Why come you thus to me?”
“I am Love’s ghost,” he said;
“Men name me Memory.”

A SONG OF LOVE

LOVE came loitering down the way,
 (Heart, but we two were young!)
Laughter light in his eyes there lay,
 Music was on his tongue;
“ Stay, Love, stay—walk with us, pray! ”
 (Sweet were the songs he sung.)

Love with us goes wandering still,
 (Heart, but his songs are sweet!)
Suns may shine, or the rains beat chill,
 What matter cold or heat?
Blue or grey, Love goes our way;
 (Summer follows his feet.)

Love, he has been a comrade true,
 (Heart, how the seasons fly!)
Joy and Sorrow have found us too,
 Greeted and passed us by;
So Love stay, they may go their way;
 (And Love can never die.)

DEAD LOVE

FOLD the hands, grown still and cold;
Lay ye by
The broken bow that shall feel his hold
Nevermore, while the seasons fly.
Draw the shroud above his eyes,
Love, that laughs an hour and dies.

Seek no more to entrance win
At his gate;
Silent now are the song and din,
Jest and dance, that were there of late.
Never more shall he arise,
Love, that laughs an hour and dies.

Listen not, for ye shall catch
Nevermore
The sound of his finger on the latch,
Nor see him stand in the open door;
Ne'er shall see, in any guise,
Love, that laughs an hour and dies.

THE WIFE FROM THE SEA

I SNATCHED her from her home away—
From her great waters, cool and free,
My sea-maid, in whose eyes there lay
The depths and dangers of the sea.

I brought her where faint breezes sweep
Through lanes walled in with hedges high,
And sown with luscious grass and deep
At ease the fatted pastures lie.

I gave her my poor cottage home,
The tame face of the countryside—
Who knew the waves' withdrawing foam,
The thunder of the bursting tide.

And day by day did I rejoice
To see her sit beside my door,
Nor knew that in her heart the voice
Of ocean called forever more.

Until the grace I would not give
Death gave. His mighty hand set free
My wild sea-maid, that could not live
Without her waters' liberty.

And I?—To me the fields are dear;
The steadfast earth is home to me.
Yet night by night in dreams I hear
Her spirit call me from the sea.

A STORM AT NIGHT

ALL night the waves broke in upon the shore
Beneath my window, and I heard the rain
With querulous, weak fingers, evermore
Beating against the pane.

And through the darkness saw—was it the sweep
Of some white sea-bird's wing above the foam,
That fain would cross those waters, wild and deep,
And find its mate and home?

Or was it—oh, dear feet, why should you leave
The halls of Heaven, with all their warmth and light,
To come where winds wail and where waters grieve,
Seeking my door last night?

Surely you came not; 'twas some bird's white breast
Flashed through the night, and not your waving hand,
Some sea-gull, weary of the waves' unrest,
That sought the steadfast land.

And yet, amid the sobbing of the rain,
Outside my window in the dark and chill,
I heard your voice, that ever and again
Called, and would not be still—

Until the morning came, sullen and red,
With waves that beat still foaming on the shore,
The wind and rain had ceased, and lo! my dead
Had gone from me once more.

KITTY'S FEET

SURE, I'm sitting here this evening, while the firelight flickers low,
And I'm looking through the shadows into eyes I used to know,
Through the years that lie between us, into tender eyes and sweet,
And I'm listening in the darkness for the sound of Kitty's feet—
Kitty's feet, whose tripping faltered into silence long ago.

Ah, 'tis well I mind those evenings, gathering shades about my chair,
And the sound of Kitty's footsteps dancing gaily down the stair
Through the hall and past the doorway, till I'd turn, her eyes to meet,
Well my heart it knew the measure that was danced by Kitty's feet—
Kitty's feet that dance no longer, lying in the silence there.

Yet to-night as I sit dreaming, while the shadows longer grow,
I can almost think I hear them, the dear steps I long for so;
Through the years that lie between us comes again the vision sweet,
And my heart once more is beating to the tune of Kitty's feet—
Kitty's feet, that tripped so lightly past Death's portals long ago.

THE PORT O' MISSING SHIPS

SHE lies across the western main,
Beyond the sunset's rim;
Her quays are packed with reeling mists—
A city strange and dim:
And silent o'er her harbour bar
The ghostly waters brim.

No sound of life is in her streets,
No creak of rope or spar
Comes ever from the water's edge
Where the great vessels are;
Yet ship by ship steals through the mists
Across her harbour bar.

There many a good galleon
Has made her anchor fast,
And many a tall caravel
Her journeyings ends at last;
But no living eye may look upon
That harbour dim and vast.

For one went down in tropic seas,
And one put fearless forth
To find her death in loneliness
'Mid icebergs of the north;
Thus ship by ship and crew by crew
The ocean tried their worth.

She lies across the western main
Beyond the sunset's rim,
Her quays are packed with reeling mists—
A city strange and dim;
And silent o'er her harbour bar
The ghostly waters brim.

THE RIDE OF THE SHADOWS

BEHIND the pines, when sunset gleams,
The white gates of the Land of Dreams
 Stand open wide,
And all adown the golden road
That leads from that most blest abode
 The shadows ride,
Who in the light of common day
 May now no more abide.

They leave their meads of asphodel,
The starry spaces where they dwell,
 Where quiet lies:
They leave their windless, glassy sea,
The angel songs and melody
 Of Paradise,
To walk again the old-time way
 Once dear to mortal eyes.

With beating heart I watch them ride
Across the gathering shades that hide
 That country bright;
The faces that I loved of yore,
Eyes that shall smile on me no more
 With mortal light;
Shadows of all good things and fair
 Come from the past to-night.

So, when the dying sunset gleams
Behind the hills, the Gate of Dreams
 Stands open wide;
And all along the golden road
From those fair mansions of their God
 Where they abide—
Dear memories of the days that were—
 I see the shadows ride.

GHOSTS

THE sky is overcast,
The wind wails loud;
Grey ghosts go driving past
In driving cloud;
And, in the beating rain
Against the window-pane
Dead fingers beat again,
Dead faces crowd.

O, grey ghosts, waiting still,
My fire burns bright;
Without is cold and chill,
Here, warm and light.
And would you have me creep
Outside to you, and sweep
With you along the steep
Of the grey night?

Nay, once I held you dear,
Before you fled
Adown the shadowy, drear
Paths of the dead;
But now the churchyard mould
Has left you all too cold,
Your hands I cannot hold,
Your touch I dread.

Yet linger patiently,
Ghosts of the past,
Soon there shall come to me
That morn's chill blast
That calls me too to tread
Those ways of doubt and dread,
And numbered with the dead
To lie at last.

OUR LADY OF DARKNESS

WHEN the toils of the day are over and the sun has sunk in the west,
And my lips are tired of laughter, and my heart is heavy for rest,
I will sit awhile in the shadows, till Our Lady of Darkness shall shed
The healing balms of her silence and her dreams upon my head.

Ye seek in vain in your temples—she dwells not in aisles of stone;
Apart, and at peace, and silent, she waits in the night alone.
Her eyes are as moonlit waters, her brows with the stars are bound,
And her footsteps move to music, but no man has heard the sound.

No incense burns at her altar—at her shrine no lamplight gleams,
But she guards the Fountains of Quiet, and she keeps the key of Dreams,
And I will sit in the shadows and pray her, of her grace,
To open her guarded visions and grant me to dream of your face.

I ask not to break the silence, but only that you shall stand,
As oft you stood in the old-time, with your hand upon my hand;
So I will sit very quiet, that Our Lady of Darkness may shed
Her balms of healing and silence and of dreams upon my head.

DALUAN

DALUAN, the Shepherd,
When winter winds blow chill,
Goes piping o'er the upland,
Goes piping by the rill;
And whoso hears his music
Must follow where he will.

Daluan, the Shepherd,
(So the old story saith)
He pipes the tunes of laughter,
The songs of sighing breath;
He pipes the souls of mortals
Through the dark gates of Death.

Daluan, the Shepherd,
Who listens to his strain
Shall look no more on laughter,
Shall taste no more of pain,
Shall know no more the longing
That eats at heart and brain.

Daluan, the Shepherd—
Beside the sobbing rill,
And through the dripping woodlands,
And up the gusty hill,
I hear the pipes of Daluan
Crying and calling still.

DEAD—AND LIVING

The Question

If we should tap on your pane to-night, dear,
Standing here in the dark outside,
As in the far-off days and bright, dear,
Say, would you fling the window wide?

Nay, you would turn to the firelight's gold, dear,
Saying, "'Tis but a dream that fled; "
Deep we lie in the churchyard mould, dear,
Who shall remember to love the dead?

(Ah, the dead, who shall come no more, dear,
Gone and forgotten, so you say—
Standing here in the dark at your door, dear,—
Dead and forgotten and gone for aye.)

Your hours pass with laughter and song, dear,
Do we blame you that you forget?
All our years are empty and long, dear,
We, in our graves, remember yet.

We remember, and ofttimes rise, dear,
From our beds 'neath the churchyard sod,
Walking ever, with wistful eyes, dear,
Old-time ways that in life we trod.

We remember, who are forgot, dear—
Do we blame you that you forget?
How should we live in your lightest thought, dear?
Only—the dead remember yet.

The Reply

Do we forget?—We cannot hear your call;
Your tap upon the pane
Sounds to our ears but as the leaves that fall,
Or beat of sobbing rain.

We cannot see you standing at the door,
Or passing through the gloom;
We strain our ears, yet hear your step no more
In the familiar room.

And seeing not—but waiting, with a numb,
Bewildered heart and brain,
And hearing not—but only winds that come
And wail against the pane,

And dreaming of you in some brighter sphere,
We—we, too—grieve and fret
That you, whom still we hold so dear, so dear,
Should all so soon forget.

THE MASTER OF SHADOWS

INTO the western waters
Slow sinks the sunset light,
And the voice of the Wind of Shadows
Calls to my heart to-night—

Calls from the magic countries,
The lost and the lovely lands
Where stands the Master of Shadows,
Holding the dreams in his hands.

All the dreams of the ages
Gather around him there,
Visions of things forgotten
And of things that never were.

Birds in the swaying woodlands,
Creatures furry and small,
Turn to the Master of Shadows
And he gives of his dreams to all.

Lo! I am worn and weary,
Sick of the garish light;
Blow, thou Wind of the Shadows,
Into my heart to-night.

Out of the magic countries,
The lost and the lovely lands,
Where he, the Master of Shadows,
Waits, with the dreams in his hands.

DIANE AU BOIS

THROUGH the sere woods she walks alone,
With bow unstrung and empty quiver;
Her hounds are dead, her maidens gone,
She walks alone forever;
Watching the while with wistful eyes
Her crescent shining in the skies.

The flutes of Pan are silent now,
Hushed is the sound of Faunus' singing;
Through winds that shake the withering bough
No dryad's voice is ringing.
Syrinx has left her river deep,
E'en old Silenus sound doth sleep.

The startled deer before her flee,
The nightingales with music meet her;
Yet never mortal eye shall see
Or mortal voices greet her.
Her shrines with weeds are overgrown,
Their fires are out; their worship done.

Yet sometimes, so 'twas told to me,
The children playing in the meadows
May hear her song, that mournfully
Comes floating through the shadows,
And sometimes see, through boughs grown bare,
The moonlit brightness of her hair.

And, it may be, her weary feet,
White gleaming through those dusky spaces,
May, after many wanderings, meet
The dear, familiar places;
And find, beyond the sunset's gold,
Ghosts of the Gods she knew of old.

THE RED HORSE

HE came and whinnied at my door,
The wild red horse, with flowing mane;
And I—I crossed the threshold o'er,
Leaving behind my wonted life,
And hope of joy, and fear of pain,
And clasp of friend, and kiss of wife,
And clinging touch of childish hands,
And love and laughter, grief and glee,
And rode him out across the sands
Beside a dark, mysterious sea.

Across my face his mane was blown,
I saw the eddying stars grow dim,
And suddenly the past had grown
A dream of weariness gone by,
And I was fain to ride with him
Forever up a darkening sky,
And hear the far, thin, fairy tune
That through the darkness seemed to beat,
Until at length the crescent moon
Was lying underneath our feet.

And there the unknown beaches lay
With stars for silvery pebbles strown,
And thin and faint and far away
Came all the noises of the world,
And up those glimmering reaches blown
The whispering waves of darkness curled.
And there my wild steed paused at last,
And there, wrapped round in dreams, I lie,
And in the wind that whistles past
I hear a far, faint, fairy cry.

THE ADVENTURERS

WE rode from the north, a valiant band,
With shining armour and swords aflame,
Till we came at length to a silent land—
To a sunless, shadowy land we came,
A desolate land, without a name.

No songs of birds in that land were known,
No voices of human joy or pain,
But mists on the silent winds were blown,
And shadows clung to our bridle rein,
Dim forms that no answer gave again.

Then some grew tired of those weary ways
And hied them back to a happier coast,
And many followed some phantom face
Down one of the winding ways that crossed
That shadowy land, and so were lost.

And the rust grew red on our harness bright,
And dull grew our swords, and a dream the Quest,
And ever wearier grew the fight
With thronging phantoms that round us pressed,
And ever our hearts grew sick for rest.

Till, few and feeble who were so strong,
Weary, who dreamed we could never tire,
We won at last through those ways so long,
And, bathed in the sunset, dome and spire,
We saw the City of Heart's Desire.

THE WATCHER OF THE THRESHOLD

SILENT amid the shadows
Outside my door,
The Watcher of the Threshold
Waits evermore.

One day the door will open,
And I shall see
The Watcher of the Threshold
Beckon to me.

And I must leave the firelight,
And seek the gloom
Where stands that shadowy figure
Outside my room.

In vain it is to question
Of how, or why,
The Watcher of the Threshold
Makes no reply.

Only amid the shadows
Silent he stands,
With eyes that hold a secret,
And folded hands.

Still standing in the darkness
Outside my door,
The Watcher of the Threshold
Waits evermore.

THE GREY RIDER

WHY ride so fast through the wind and rain,
Grey Rider of the Shee?
Lest a soul should call for me in vain
To-night, O Vanathee.

Now, whose is the soul shall seek thine aid,
Grey Rider of the Shee?
The soul of one that is sore afraid
To-night, O Vanathee.

O fears he the flurry of wind and rain,
Grey Rider of the Shee?
More deep is the dread that sears his brain
To-night, O Vanathee.

Does he fear the tumult of clanging blows,
Grey Rider of the Shee?
Nay, darker still is the fear he knows
To-night, O Vanathee.

Does he fear the loss of or wife or child,
Grey Rider of the Shee?
Nay, a terror holds him that's still more wild
To-night, O Vanathee.

O what should make him so sore afraid,
Grey Rider of the Shee?
He fears a wraith that himself has made
To-night, O Vanathee.

THE GREY RIDER

49

Then how shall you cleanse from fear his mind,
Grey Rider of the Shee?
I will touch his eyes, and they shall be blind
To-night, O Vanathee.

Yet still may he know the voice of fear,
Grey Rider of the Shee?
I will touch his ears that he shall not hear
To-night, O Vanathee.

Yet that wraith may linger around his bed,
Grey Rider of the Shee?
No terror shall touch the quiet dead
To-night, O Vanathee

Shee, Sidhe—Fairies.

Vanathee, Bean-an-Tighe—Woman of the house.

JOAN THE MAID

STILL, they say, she moves through the old-time places,
Joan the Maid, with her great sword girt at her side;
Sheen of wings and shimmer of angel faces
Gather around her as she on doth ride.

Rheims or Orleans may see her thus in splendour,
Never the old Domremy streets she knew,
Here she walks as a maiden, shy and slender,
Brushing with bare brown feet the evening dew.

Oft do the children, playing in the meadows,
See her watching them, white and very fair,
Smiling lips and eyes that dream in the shadows,
Lilies of France she loved so in her hair.

So she comes, through those quiet roadways stealing,
Where in the grey church still her people bend,
Unto the Maiden, their own saint, appealing;
Hears them name her saviour of France and friend.

She has forgotten now the mocking faces,
Prison, and wounds, and torture of the flame;
Still, they say, she moves through the old-time places,
Joan the Maid, whence once, long since, she came.

NEWBURY TOWN

RUPERT's soldiers came riding, riding,
All in the sunshine riding down,
Scented curls on the breezes flowing,
Banners dancing and bugles blowing,
Gaily the troops came riding, riding,
Through the streets of Newbury town.

Bells in the church towers all were swinging,
Flags were waving and flowers were strown;
Roses lay in the road before them,
Roses rained from the casements o'er them,
All in the streets, with shout and singing,
Prayed that the King might win his own.

Rupert's soldiers came riding, riding,
All in the darkness riding down;
Never a church-bell chimed to greet them,
Never a maid came forth to meet them;
Broken, defeated, they came riding
Through the streets of Newbury town

Never more while the bells are calling
Rupert's soldiers come riding down;
They have ridden, with bugles blowing
Into a land beyond our knowing,
Never more shall their footsteps falling
Haunt the streets of Newbury town.

NEWBURY TOWN

Yet, as I sit here, idly dreaming,
Watching the water onward flow,
Still I see, in the sun or shadow,
Rupert's soldiers across the meadow,
Banners blowing and lovelocks streaming,
Riding back from the long ago.

And in my dreams they still are riding,
Victor or vanquished, riding down;
Now with the roses strewn before them—
Now with the darkness gathering o'er them—
Rupert's soldiers, forever riding
Through the streets of Newbury town.

A CHRISTMAS HYMN

No room for Thee, O Baby Jesukin,
 No room within the inn;
Only the stable door is standing wide,
 And there inside
The ox and ass their patient foreheads bow
 Before Thee now.

No room for Thee, O little Lord of all,
 In cottage or in hall;
Yet o'er Thy stable angel voices sound
 Telling around
To the wide world a Prince is born to them
 In Bethlehem.

No room for Thee—yet the wise Kings have sped
 To kneel beside Thy bed,
Offering their gifts, myrrh, frankincense, and gold,
 To Thee to hold;
And all the angel armies of the air
 Are gathered there.

No room for Thee—yet the wide earth is Thine,
 And this poor heart of mine;
Though oft Thy Hand has tried its doors in vain,
 Yet come again;
Wide open now it stands—O Light of Light,
 Enter to-night.

THE SHEPHERDS' SONG

We be silly shepherds,
Men of no renown,
Guarding well our sheepfolds
Hard by Bethlehem town;
Baby Jesus, guard us all,
Cot and sheepfold, bower and stall.

Wild the wind was blowing,
Sudden all was still,
Laughter soft of angels
Rang from hill to hill.
Baby Jesus, Thou wast born
Ere that midnight paled to morn.

Seek we now Thy presence
With our gifts of love;
Felix brings a lambkin,
I will give a dove.
Baby Jesus, small and sweet,
Lo, we lay them at Thy feet.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Just a little baby lying in a manger,
God of Gods and Light of Lights, the mighty King of Kings,
Hark! the choiring angels chant their glad evangels,
All the air is pulsing with the music of their wings.

Just a little baby on Mary's breast that bore Him,
Helpless feet, and clinging hands, and lips that knew no word,
And the darkness ringing with the angels' singing,
Sounding through the solemn night, "All glory to the Lord."

Just a little baby wrapped in swaddling clothing—
All the earth forever thrills rejoicing in that birth,
Through the centuries flying still hears those angels crying,
"Glory be to God on high, and peace, goodwill to earth."

DE PROFUNDIS

LORD, from this prison-house that we have built,
This dark abode of pain and misery,
Failure and guilt,
We stretch our hands, we stretch our hands to Thee,
Lord, set us free.

O Lord, Thou knowest all—Thou knowest well
The groping hands, the eyes that would not see,
The feet that fell;
Yet are we fain—are fain to come to Thee,
Lord, set us free.

Bitter the chains that we have borne so long,
The chains of sin we wove so heedlessly;
Lo, Thou art strong,
Out of the deeps we cry—we cry to Thee,
Lord, set us free.

THE CRY OF THE DAMNED

HAVE you no pity for us?—You, who stand
Within that Heaven that we may never win,
Who know the golden streets of that fair land
Our weary feet are fain to be within.
Have you no ruth for us, who must abide
In the great horror of the night outside?

We, too, once knew of laughter and delight,
Who now must walk these weary roads of pain;
Our hearts were pure as yours, our faces bright,
In that glad life we may not know again;
We might have gained your Heaven too—even we
Who dwell with madness and with memory.

Within the pleasant pastures where your feet
Stray, comes there never thought of our distress?
Do our wails never mar your music sweet?
Our parched throats change your draught to bitterness?
Your chance was ours—we lost it; yes, we know
Ours was the fault—but, is it easier so?

Yet was it ours?—The dazzled eyes and blind,
The wills that knew, but could not hold the good,
The groping feet, that failed the path to find,
The wild desires that filled the tainted blood?
Have you no ruth, who those bright barriers crossed,
For us, who saw them open—and are lost?

OUR LADY OF REMEMBRANCE

SHE stoops to us from her dim recess
With weary and wistful eyes;
She has grown so tired of the censer's swing,
Of the white-robed choir and the songs they sing,
Of the priest's pale hand, upraised to bless,
And the feast and the sacrifice.

They bow to her as the Mother blest
Of the great and awful God;
But her heart holds dearest His early years,
The childish laughter, the childish tears,
Ere His feet had the road of sorrows pressed,
Or the way to the cross had trod.

Her thoughts go back to the days of yore—
Away from the garish light,
And the organ's droning melody,
To the starry shores of Galilee,
To the vines that shaded her cottage door,
And the hush of the Eastern night.

So she bends to us from her dim recess
With weary and wistful eyes,
And turns away from the tapers' light
To dream of the cool and the hush of night,
From the priest's pale hand, upraised to bless,
To the starry Eastern skies.

MAID MARY

MAID MARY sat at her cottage door

By the Lake of Galilee;

Tall and stately her lilies were,

But never was lily one-half so fair

Or half so pure as she.

(O Mary, Maid and Mother of God,

I pray you, pray for me.)

The shadows darkened along the shore

Of the Lake of Galilee;

What steps were those, as the twilight fell?

Lo, God's great angel, Gabriel:

"Hail, blessed of God!" spake he.

(O Gabriel, Prince of the hosts of God,

I pray you, pray for me.)

Maid Mary knelt on her cottage floor

By the Lake of Galilee;

And kneeling, dreamed strange dreams and sweet

Of baby fingers and dimpled feet,

And a Holy Thing to be:

(O Christ, the Virgin-born Son of God,

I pray You, pray for me.)

But she did not dream, as the night passed o'er

By the Lake of Galilee,

Of the weary ways that the feet should tread,

Of a thorny crown for a baby head,

Or a cross on Calvary.

(O Son of Mary, O thorn-crowned God,

I pray You, pray for me.)

THE TWO CROWNS

THE young King rode through the City street,
So gallant, gay and bold;
There were roses strewn 'neath his horse's feet,
His brows were bound with gold,
And his heart was glad for his people's cheers
Along his pathway rolled.

Glad was his heart and bright his face,
For life and youth were fair;
And he rode through many a pleasant place—
Broad street and sunny square—
Till he came to the market-place and saw
A crucifix stand there.

Hushed were the crowd's exultant cries,
To awe-struck silence grown;
For they saw the young King's laughing eyes
Grow grave beneath his crown,
As the crownéd King looked up, for lo!
A crownéd King looked down.

Grave were the eyes above, and sad;
The face with pain was lined,
And the piercé hands no sceptre had;
Both brows a crown did bind.
But the earthly King was crowned with gold—
The Christ with thorns entwined.

THE TWO CROWNS

61

Slowly the young King homeward rode
In awe and wondering;
He had looked that day on the face of God,
And learned that for a king
The lordliest crown his brows can bear
Is the crown of suffering.

A SPARROW IN CHURCH

THOU, Who hast said no sparrow e'er shall fall
Without Thy knowledge, lend me now Thine aid.
I cry to Thee, O mighty Lord of all,
Thy little living creature, sore afraid.

All my short life these fluttering wings have known
Only the freedom of Thy sun and rain,
And now they beat against these walls of stone—
Lord of the sparrows, shall they beat in vain?

The terrors of Thine House encompass me,
Upon Thine altar I myself have laid;
Hearken, O Lord, Thy sparrow calls to Thee,
Thy little living creature, sore afraid.

SEA-GULLS

WHERE the dark green hollows lift
 Into crests of snow,
Wheeling, flashing, floating by,
White against the stormy sky,
With exultant call and cry
 Swift the sea-gulls go.

Fearless, vagabond and free,
 Children of the spray,
Spirits of old mariners
Drifting down the restless years—
Drake's and Hawkins' buccaneers,
 So do sea-men say.

Watching, guarding, sailing still
 Round the shores they knew,
Where the cliffs of Devon rise
Red against the sullen skies,
(Dearer far than Paradise)
 'Mid the tossing blue.

Not for them the heavenly song;
 Sweeter still they find
Than those angels, row on row,
Thunder of the bursting snow
Seething on the rocks below,
 Singing of the wind.

SEA-GULLS

Fairer than the streets of gold
Those wild fields of foam,
Where the horses of the sea
Stamp and whinny ceaselessly,
Warding from all enemy
Shores they once called home.

So the sea-gulls call and cry
'Neath the cliffs to-day,
Spirits of old mariners
Drifting down the restless years—
Drake's and Hawkins' buccaneers—
So do sea-men say.

MY DOG AND I

My dog and I, the hills we know
Where the first faint wild roses blow,
We know the shadowy paths and cool
 That wind across the woodland dim,
And where the water beetles swim
Upon the surface of the pool.

My dog and I, our feet brush through
Full oft, the fragrant morning dew,
Or, when the summer sun is high,
 We linger where the river flows
 Chattering and chuckling as it goes—
Two happy tramps, my dog and I.

Or, when the winter snows are deep,
Into some fire-lit nook we creep,
And, while the north wind howls outside,
 See castles in the dancing blaze,
 Or, dozing, dream of summer days
And woodland stretches, wild and wide.

My dog and I are friends till death,
And when the chill, dark angel's breath
Shall call him from me, still I know,
 Somewhere within the shadowy land
 Waiting his master he will stand
Until my summons comes to go.

MY DOG AND I

And, in that life so strange and new,
We'll tramp the fields of heaven through,
Loiter the crystal river by;
 Together walk the hills of God
 As when the hills of earth we trod,
Forever friends, my dog and I.

SNOWDROPS

FEBRUARY fair maids,
All along the lane,
Dancing with the breezes,
Nodding to the rain,
Whispering tales of Springtime
Through the snow and sleet,
February fair maids,
Brave and bright and sweet.

February fair maids,
Soon you'll disappear,
Soon the swallow's twitter
Tells that Spring is here.
Soon the rose and lily
Laugh 'neath skies of blue—
February fair maids,
None so brave as you.

February fair maids,
Dancing down the lane,
Bowing to the breezes,
Smiling at the rain,
Lifting laughing faces
Through the snow and sleet—
February fair maids,
Brave and bright and sweet.

SPRING

Lo, the spring has come again!
 Down the lane
Silent, first, the snowdrop came;
Green each bursting leaf-bud swells
 In the dells
Where the crocus breaks in flame.

Spring, with all the daffodils
 On her hills,
Comes and wakes the world to mirth:
List with what reverberant glee
 Streams set free
Tell their triumph to the earth.

Hark! Once more the cuckoo's call,
 Musical, magical,
Over all the land doth ring;
Little waves upon the beach,
 Each to each
Laughing, whisper, "'Tis the Spring."

OCTOBER WIND

THE piper wind goes straying
Into the morning skies,
With fern seed in his pocket,
And laughter in his eyes,
And the swift clouds break, and follow
His magic melodies.

The piper wind goes playing
His music, sweet and shrill,
And, brave in red and yellow,
The leaves dance on the hill;
And the purple plumes of aster
Nod gaily by the rill.

The piper wind goes roaming
O'er upland, glade and plain,
He whispers to the sunshine,
He whistles through the rain,
He dreams among the pine trees
And wakes, and laughs again.

The piper wind goes homing
Adown the sunset skies,
With fern seed in his pocket,
And laughter in his eyes;
And our hearts are fain to follow
His magic melodies.

OCTOBER

Now, when the summer flowers are past and dead,
And, from the earth's wild bosom, brown and bare,
 No trillium lifts its head;
When, in the hollows where the violets were
 Purple and white and fair,
Only a few brown leaves are falling now,
 The wind shakes from the bough:

Now, when the tiger-lily's flame no more
 Burns in the long, lush grasses on the hill,
 And, by the river shore,
The smoky trail of asters, lingering still,
 Thins, and the air grows chill
With the first feathery snowflakes, that anon
 Fall softly and are gone:

O let us leave this dull and dusty street,
 The noise and heat and turmoil of the town
 For country waysides sweet,
Lanes where the nuts are clustering, plump and brown,
 Hedges blackberries crown;
Come, ere the shivering blasts of winter blow,
 Let us make haste and go.

IN ARCADIE

HEART of my heart, the long road lies
A streak of white across the down
To where the hill-tops touch the skies;
Then let us seek the mountain's crown
And cross its summit, bare and brown,
Heart of my heart, O come with me
To walk the ways of Arcadie.

Heart of my heart, right merrily
The little winds of Springtime blow,
The air is full of melody,
The birds are singing, soft and low;
Heart of my heart, then let us go
Across the hills, and wander free
The pleasant paths of Arcadie.

There sunny land and sunny sea
Lie drowsing in the noontide heat,
There song of bird and hum of bee
Mix in a music wild and sweet,
And in the thyme beneath our feet
Cicalas chirp their melody,
Across the hills in Arcadie.

IN ARCADIE

Or, when the twilight shadows steep
The hill-tops with a misty light,
And stars their quiet watches keep
Through the short hours of summer night,
And glow-worms burn their lanterns bright,
The streams still murmur sleepily
Across the hills in Arcadie.

Heart of my heart, O let us leave
The toil and turmoil of the town,
And men that work and men that grieve,
And take the road across the down
And climb the hill-top, bare and brown;
Heart of my heart, O come with me
To walk the ways of Arcadie.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

WAVE your hand to him! Let him go
Back from the dusty paths we stray,
To the land where his boyhood's rivers flow;
He is not dead—he is just away,
Gone to laugh at 'Lizabuth Ann,
And swap old yarns with the Raggedy Man.

Hush! Do you hear, in the distance dim,
Faint and sweet as an elfin tune,
Orphant Annie is calling him,
Counting him in with the old-time rune—
Intry, mintry, cutery, corn,
Apple blossom and apple thorn.

Wave your hand to him—call good-bye!
Faintly his answer echoes back;
Voices of children eagerly
Lure him on by the fairy track
To the wonder-world, where all hearts are gay;
He is not dead, he is just—away.

THE SANDMAN

WHEN the long, hot day is over,
And the sun drops down the west,
And the childish hands are weary,
And the childish feet must rest,
The Sandman steals through the portals
Where the dying sunlight gleams,
And touches the tired eyelids
And lulls them into dreams.

Even so, when life is over,
And the long day's march is past,
We wait in gathering shadows
Till the Sandman comes at last.
Sad are our hearts and weary,
And long the waiting seems;
Lord, we are tired children;
Touch Thou our eyes with dreams.

Take from the slackened fingers
The toys so heavy grown,
Give to Thy tired children
Visions of Thee alone;
Then, when at length the shadows
Darken adown the west,
Send to us Death, Thy Sandman,
To call Thine own to rest.

THE REMITTANCE MEN

SHE stands in peace by her waters,
Our Mother, fair and wise,
And ever amid our dreaming
We see her hills arise;
We, who have sold our birthright,
Sons, who have failed at need,
Outcast, lost and dishonoured,
We know her fair indeed.

Yes, we have sold our birthright—
Well have we learned the cost—
Drink-sodden, hateful bodies,
And souls forever lost;
We see the heights above us,
The depths into which we fall,
And we turn from that sight in horror,
Drinking to drown it all.

Lo, we have lost her forever!
Exiled, unclean, alone;
Yet she was once our Mother,
Once we were sons of her own;
We—who have failed her and shamed her,
Cast from her shores so long,
Still in our dreams we see her,
Noble and wise and strong.

THE REMITTANCE MEN

Once in a far-off country
We named her great and fair,
They mocked us with scornful laughter,
“Lo, these are the sons she bare!”
Do we not feel our bondage,
We, who have owned her name,
When we dare not whisper her praises
Lest we whelm her in our shame?

Yet do the outcasts love her,
Who once were bone of her bone,
Pray for her life and honour
Who dare not pray for their own;
Out of the hell we have chosen
Watch her, with longing eyes—
She, who was once our Mother,
Excellent, just and wise.

THE LAST VOYAGE

WHEN I loose my vessel's moorings, and put out to sea once more
On the last and longest voyage that shall never reach the shore,
O Thou Master of the Ocean, send no tranquil tides to me,
But 'mid all Thy floods and thunders let my vessel put to sea.

Let her lie within no tropic sea, dead rotten to the bone,
Till the lispig, sluggish waters claim my vessel for their own;
Till the sun shall scar her timbers, and the slimy weed shall crawl
O'er her planks that gape and widen, and the slow sea swallow all.

Let her not go down in darkness, where the smoking mist-wreaths hide
The white signal of the breakers, dimly guessed at, overside;
While her decks are in confusion, and the wreck drops momentarily,
And she drifts in dark and panic to the death she cannot see.

But out in the open ocean, where the great waves call and cry,
Leap and thunder at her taffrail, while the scud blows stinging by,
With the life still strong within her, struggling onward through the blast,
Till one last long wave shall whelm her, and our voyaging is past.

BALLADE OF DREAMS

WE dreamed our dreams in full many lands,
By mount and forest, by stream and lea,
Dreams of the touch of old-time hands,
Dreams of a future destiny,
Dreams of battle and victory,
Laughter and love and wealth and fame;
Dreamers of dreams, indeed, were we—
Have the lichens yet o'ergrown our name?

Our rivers of dream had golden sands,
Our forests of Dream waved fair to see,
Our Dreamland Isles were enchanted strands
With shores of magic and mystery;
How should we dream of misery
With the blood of youth at our hearts aflame?
Dreamers of dreams, indeed, were we—
Have the lichens yet o'ergrown our name?

If a mortal now our fate demands
(We who so long forgotten be),
He shall seek in vain, for our wandering bands
Now wait here, all so dreamlessly;
O the restless hearts rest quietly,
And the fire is quenched that no frost could tame;
Dreamers of dreams, indeed, were we—
Have the lichens yet o'ergrown our name?

L'Envoi

Prince, this world is all vanity,
And dream and deed, they are still the same;
Dreamers of dreams, indeed, were we—
Have the lichens yet o'ergrown our name?

SHIPS OF OLD RENOWN

TRIEMES of the Roman, cruising down to Antioch,
Longships of the Northmen, galleons of Spain,
Tall, gleaming caravels, swinging in the tideway,
Never shall the sunlight gild their sails again.

Never shall those white sails, lifting on the sea-line,
Swoop like a swallow across the blinding blue,
Caracque and caravel, lying 'neath the waters,
Wait till the bugles shall call the last review.

There in the darkness lie friend and foe together,
Drake's English pinnaces, the great Armada's host;
Quiet they lie in the silence of the sea-depths,
Waiting the call that shall sound from coast to coast.

War-ship and merchantmen, lying in the slime there,
Galleys of the Algerine, and traders of Almayne,
Hoys of the Dutchman, and haughty ships of Venice,
Never shall the sunlight gild their sails again.

SEA-SONG

I WILL go down to my sea again—to the waste of waters, wild and wide;
I am tired—so tired—of hill and plain and the dull tame face of the country
side.

I will go out across the bar, with a swoop like the flight of a sea-bird's wings,
To where the winds and the waters are, with their multitudinous thunderings.

My prow shall furrow the whitening sea, out into the teeth of the lashing
wind,
Where a thousand billows snarl and flee and break in a smother of foam
behind.

O strong and terrible Mother Sea, let me lie once more on your cool white
breast,
Your winds have blown through the heart of me and called me back from
the land's dull rest.

For night by night they blow through my sleep; the voice of waves through
my slumber rings;
I feel the spell of the steadfast deep; I hear its trappings and triumphings.

And at last, when my hours of life are sped, let them make me no grave by
hill or plain—
Thy waves, O Mother, shall guard my head. I will go down to my sea again.

THE SEA-WIND

I AM weary of this country, with its hedges and its walls,
And all night I do be dreaming how the water calls and calls;
Of the booming of the breakers as they dash against the shore,
And the salt wind, the sea-wind, the wind I'll hear no more.

I am weary of these meadows, where the sun comes scorching down
Till the ways are dry and dusty, and the grass is burnt and brown;
And forever through my dreaming come the great waves' lash and leap,
And the salt wind, the sea-wind, the wind upon the deep.

Should I die here in this country, and its stifling turf be pressed
Hot and heavy o'er my bosom, O 'tis never I could rest;
Let me lie beneath the washing of the green and silent wave,
With the salt wind, the sea-wind, to sing above my grave.

MY PHILOSOPHY

LIFE is a game that all must play;
Though you win or lose, though you gain or pay,
Whatever the cards you hold, I say,
 Throw back your head and laugh.

Keep Youth's fire at your heart aglow,
A clasp for a friend and a fist for a foe,
And then let come or joy or woe,
 Throw back your head and laugh.

Laugh, though the world upon you frown,
Laugh, though the deeps your soul shall drown,
Many a better man goes down—
 Throw back your head and laugh.

And when Death's hand on your shoulder lies
And the world grows dim to your failing eyes,
Let him not say: "A coward dies."
 Throw back your head and laugh.

EASTER, 1917

I.M. Thomas MacDonagh

HE died for thee, O mournful Mother Erin!

A year ago he turned his face away
From the glad Spring, in her young green appearing;
He lingered not to listen to the lay
Of thrush or blackbird; turned him not aside
To watch the glory of the daffodils
That shone and fluttered on a hundred hills,
But where the mists had gathered, chill and grey,
He chose his path—and died.

And now another Spring makes green the meadows,
The daffodils are golden once again,
The little winds are dancing with the shadows
The young leaves make; once more the world is fain
Of life and laughter—but he shall not see
The leaf-strewn hollows where the violets grow,
Or watch the hawthorn buds foam into snow,
No more shall feel the warm, soft, springtime rain,
For he has died for thee.

And yet this year, 'mid all the Spring's rejoicing,
There sounds at times, I think, a sadder note;
This Spring no longer is the blackbird voicing
Such jubilation from his golden throat;

The winds, grown older, dance with feet of lead,
The daffodils are nodding listlessly,
The violet has no perfume for the bee,
The grasshopper has donned his dullest coat,
Remembering he is dead.

Yet once again, O thrush, break into singing;
Laugh, daffodils, to feel the falling rain;
Winter is past, and the young earth is springing
Joyous to greet her risen Lord again:
And he who loved you—deem not that he lies
Unheeding of your grief beneath his mound,
No more the sleep of Death enwraps him round:
Rejoice, O Erin, Death to-day is slain,
But Valour never dies.

V

“HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD”

APRIL in England! Daffodils are growing
 'Neath every hedgerow, golden, tall and fair;
April! and all the little winds are blowing
 The scents of Springtime through the sunny air;
April in England! God! that we were there!

April in England! And her sons are lying
 On these red fields, and dreaming of her shore;
April! We hear the thrushes' songs replying
 Each unto each, above the cannons' roar.
April in England! Shall we see it more?

April in England! There's the cuckoo calling
 Down in her meadows, where the cowslip gleams;
April! And little showers are softly falling,
 Dimpling the surface of her babbling streams.
April in England! How the shrapnel screams!

April in England! Blood and dust and smother,
 Screaming of horses, moans of agony;
April! Full many of thy sons, O Mother,
 Never again those dewy dawns shall see.
April in England! God, keep England free.

THE KAISER

"I AM the Lord of War," he said, and bared
His blade. "Dominion shall be mine alone."
East, south, west, north, his clamorous bugles blared,
His battle lines were thrown.

Then lo! the leopards of England woke from sleep,
Roaring their challenge forth across the sea,
And France's voice was heard in thunders deep,
Calling on Liberty.

And Belgium sprang, alert, to meet the foe,
And from her mountains Serbia sent her bands,
And the great bear of Russia, growling low,
Turned from his northern lands.

Far over land and sea the summons swept,
And Canada, among her fields of grain,
Threw down the sickle, caught the sword, and leapt,
Shouting, across the main.

Australia, hasting from the southward, came;
Africa, India sprang into the fight.
"Lo, Kaiser! here our answer to thy claim;
Now God shall show the right."

Then he who drew the blade looked forth, and saw
That ring of steel and fire about his throne,
And knew himself at last, with trembling awe,
The Lord of Death alone.

CAPTAINS ADVENTUROUS

CAPTAINS adventurous, from your ports of quiet,
From the ghostly harbours where your sea-beat galleons lie,
Say, do your dreams go back across the sea-line
Where cliffs of England rise grey against the sky?

Say, do you dream of the pleasant ports of old-time,
Orchards of old Devon, all afoam with snowy bloom?
Or have the mists that veil the Sea of Shadows
Closed from your eyes all the memories of home?

Feet of the Captains hurry through the stillness,
Ghostly sails of galleons are drifting to and fro,
Voices of mariners sound across the shadows,
Waiting the word that shall bid them up and go.

“Lo now,” they say, “for the grey old Mother calls us,”
(Listening to the thunder of the guns about her shore)
“Death shall not hold us, nor years that lie between us,
Sail we to England, to strike for her once more.”

Captains adventurous, rest ye in your havens,
Pipe your ghostly mariners to keep their watch below;
Sons of your sons are here to strike for England,
Heirs of your glory—Beatty, Jellicoe.

Yet shall your names ring on in England's story,
You, who were the prophets of the mighty years to be;
Drake, Blake, and Nelson, thundering down the ages,
Captains adventurous, the Masters of the Sea.

DRAKE'S DRUM ✓

DRAKE's drum is beating along the coasts of Devon :

“Mariners, O Mariners, who warred so well with Spain,
Lo, the foe is here once more! Leave the ports of Heaven,
Haste across the jasper sea, and drive them home again.”

All the streets of Paradise echo to its rattle—

Golden roads a-tremble to the chime of tramping feet;
Hawkins, Drake and Frobisher are marching forth to battle:
“Peter, open wide the gates. We're out to join the fleet.”

Pinnacle, caravel, caracque—many a galleon drifting—

Shadowy sails of old renown upon the shadowy sea;
Ghostly voices through the mists; “Lo, the white cliffs lifting;
Heaven's streets for those who will, but Devon's shores for me.”

Drake's drum is beating along the coasts of Devon,

Calling, as in days of old it called to vanquish Spain;
Drake and Blake and Raleigh, they have left the ports of Heaven,
Homing back across the stars to England's cliffs again.

OUR DEAD

Not where the English turf grows green we laid them,
Where their forefathers lie;
O'er the rude trench and rough-built mound we made them
Arches an alien sky.

No chime of bells from old-time towers above them;
No sound of English streams,
Calling of rooks, or voice of those who love them,
Ever shall break their dreams.

What matters it? The earth that o'er them closes
Its flowers as softly sheds
As English winds could bring the English roses
To rain upon their heads.

And though an alien land their dust is keeping,
Still in their hearts with pride
They say: "Though England may not guard our sleeping,
Yet 'tis for her we died."

And with each wind across the waves that sever
Them from the land they knew,
Shall blow this message through their hearts forever:
"England remembers too."

NEW YEAR'S EVE, 1916

GREGORY fell beside the Marne,
And John where flows the Aisne;
But here to-night, ere midnight chime,
We three shall meet again.

Though land and sea lie wide between,
Their ghosts this way shall win,
For, three true men, we made a bond
To watch the New Year in.

We made it on a Flanders field
Where white the shell-smoke ran;
And who is Death to break the faith
That man has pledged to man?

Then draw their chairs beside the fire
And brim their cups with wine;
For ere the bells of midnight swing
Their hands shall clasp with mine.

Though Gregory lies where Marne runs down,
And John beside the Aisne,
Living and dead, ere midnight chime,
We three shall meet again.

TO IRELAND'S DEAD

AH, golden youths! who leave for evermore
Your ports of quiet breath,
Turning your prows from Life's familiar shore
Forth with adventurous Death.

With that great comrade sailing, side by side,
To meet your warrior peers,
Whose names have starred the roll of Erin's pride
Down all the echoing years.

Your sunlit sails flash for a moment's space,
Fade, waver and are gone;
But, straining through the mists, our spirits trace
A glory lingering on.

Farewell, great fellowship! Sail on, nor mourn
Your ports of quiet breath;
Your prows with singing and with laughter turn
Forth with adventurous Death.

A SONG OF EXILE

WHAT is the news of England?
The April breezes blow,
Bringing to us faint odours
From lanes we used to know—
Lanes, where the hawthorn hedges
Foam into blossoms white;
What is the news of England
For England's sons to-night?

What is the news of England?
'Neath her white cliffs the sea
Croons its soft song of summer,
The golden days to be.
Her hills are fair with promise,
Her woods with voices ring,
From every copse the cuckoo
Shouts to the jocund Spring.

What is the news of England?
Once more the cowslip gleams
Gold in her misty meadows,
Gold by her murmuring streams.
Once more the April breezes
Blow secrets of delight
From the great heart of England
To England's sons to-night.

THE AIR-MEN

WE brought great ships to birth,
We builded towns and towers—
Lords of the sea and earth,
Soon shall the sky be ours.

Soon shall our navies drift
Like swallows down the wind,
Shall wheel and swoop and lift,
Leaving the clouds behind.

The stars our keels shall know,
The eagle, as it flies,
Shall scream to see us go
Swift moving through the skies.

High o'er the mountain-steep
Our wingèd fleets shall sail,
The serried squadrons sweep,
White-pinioned down the gale.

We are the lords of the land,
We built us towns and towers,
The sea has felt our hand—
Soon shall the sky be ours.

THE DEFEATED

CHEER if you will the brave deed done, with laurels the victor crown,
But keep one leaf of your wreath of bay for the men who lost and are down—
For the fight in vain, for the cankered grain that in blood and tears was sown.

Honour the strong of heart and hand, the sure of will and of sight,
But what of the stumbling feet, the eyes that strain in vain for light?
Is there no gain for the tears and pain of the men who fell in the fight?

Beaten—baffled—with standards lost—knowing no rallying cry,
Struggling still, but with failing strength, while stronger men pass by:—
Keep ye your bays; I give my praise to the men who lose and die.

THE GENTLEMEN OF OXFORD

THE sunny streets of Oxford
Are lying still and bare,
No sound of voice or laughter
Rings through the golden air;
And, chiming from her belfry,
No longer Christchurch calls
The eager, boyish faces
To gather in her halls.

The colleges are empty,
Only the sun and wind
Make merry in the places
The lads have left behind.
But, when the trooping shadows
Have put the day to flight,
The Gentlemen of Oxford
Come homing through the night.

From France they come, and Flanders,
From Mons, and Marne and Aisne,
From Greece and from Gallipoli
They come to her again;
From the North Sea's grey waters,
From many a grave unknown,
The Gentlemen of Oxford
Come back to claim their own.

The dark is full of laughter,
Boy laughter, glad and young,
They tell the old-time stories,
The old-time songs are sung;
They linger in her cloisters,
They throng her dewy meads,
Till Isis hears their calling
And laughs among her reeds.

But, when the east is whitening
To greet the rising sun,
And slowly, over Carfax,
The stars fade, one by one,
Then, when the dawn-wind whispers
Along the Isis shore,
The Gentlemen of Oxford
Must seek their graves once more.



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